Automated Medication System - Benefits For Nursing

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The Royal Alexandra Hospitals (RAH) is a 1,252 bed plus 160 bassinet, City of Edmonton and University of Alberta affiliated active treatment teaching center. It provides a wide range of general, specialized and tertiary care services to patients referred from central and northern Alberta, adjoining provinces and territories. Approximately 46,000 patients are admitted annually. The processing of medication orders plus the administration and documentation requirements consume a large portion of nursing time. Since 1988 the RAH's forty nursing units have been reaping the benefits of an automated medication system, which is part of an integrated hospital information system on two sites. A collaborative multi-disiplinary approach was utilized to develop a customized system for approximately 2,000 nurses, student nurses, nursing assistants, and unit clerks.

This presentation will provide an overview of the medication system beginning with the order entry process. There are numerous safety checks such as duplicate order and unverified order alerts. Also, the system is streamlined to accommodate nursings' diverse specialties.

The selection of each nurse's patient assignment will be discussed as well as the medication worksheets resulting from this selection process. Medication logging will be reviewed and will include the automatic narcotic tracking. The capability to log all medications for assigned patients has proven to be a definite time saver. The medication administration record is stored entirely in the system and is not part of the paper chart. A summary will be given of the numerous reports that are invaluable to nursing, with special emphasis on quality assurance. Additional availability of medication information such as the IV manual and Pediatric Drug Calculator will be addressed. An on-line demonstration of the system will be presented concurrently with the oral presentation.